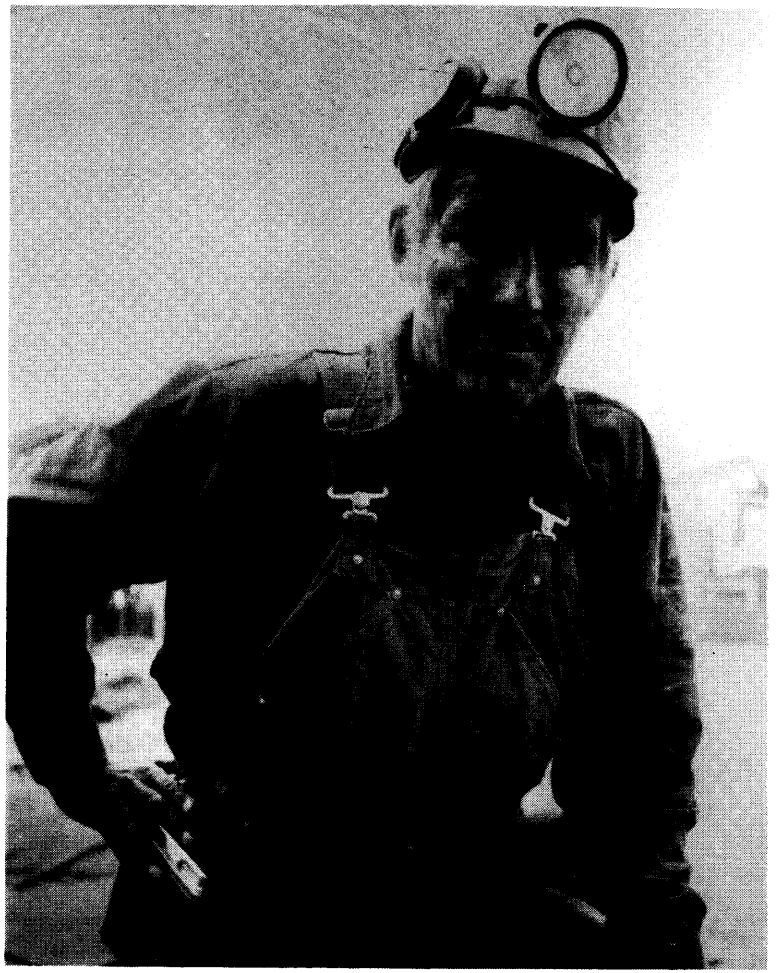
The Feasibility of a Kentucky Coal Museum



Research Report No. 151
Legislative Research Commission
Frankfort, Kentucky

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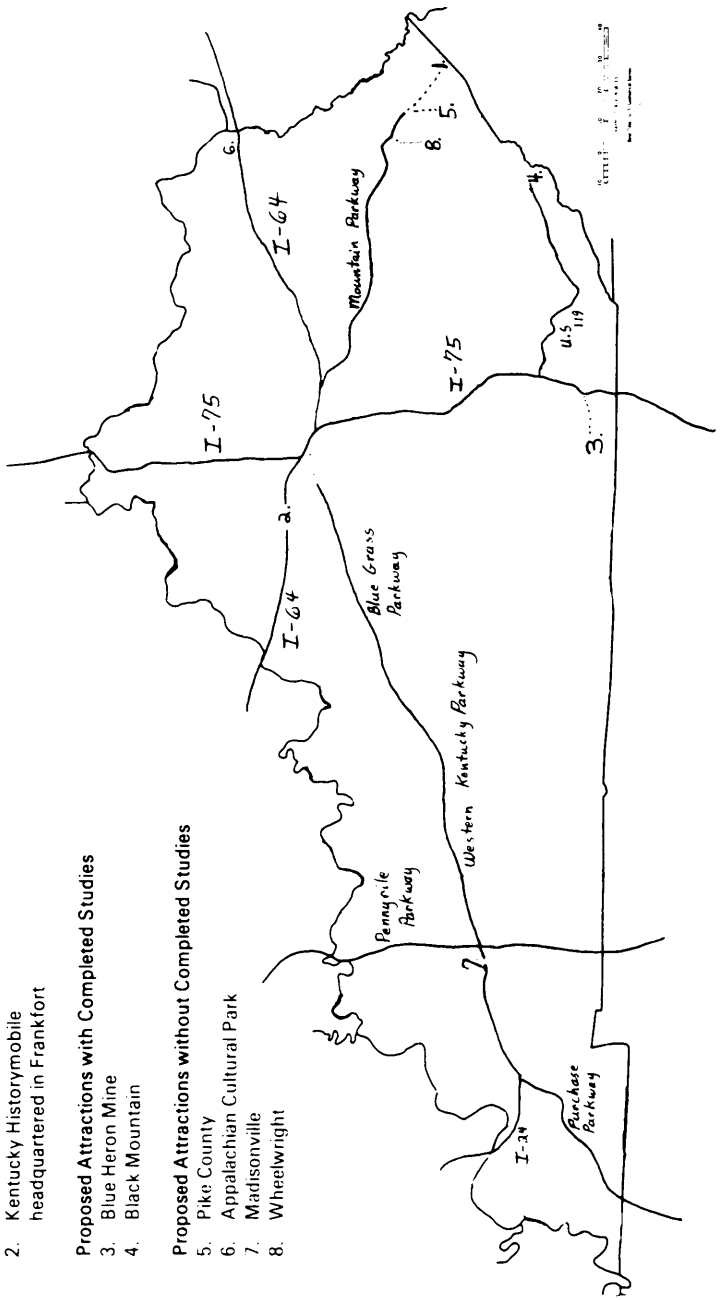
APPENDIX 3



Operating Attractions
1. Breaks Interstate Park
2. Kentucky Historymobile headquartered in Frankfort

Proposed Attractions with Completed Studies
3. Blue Heron Mine
4. Black Mountain

Proposed Attractions without Completed Studies
5. Pike County
6. Appalachian Cultural Park
7. Madisonville
8. Wheelwright

The Feasibility of a Kentucky Coal Museum

Prepared by
Linda Kubala
Brent Neiser

Research Report No. 151
Legislative Research Commission
Frankfort, Kentucky
March, 1979

This Report was prepared by the Legislative Research Commission and paid for from state funds

APPENDIX 2

CURRENT COAL MINE TOURS IN KENTUCKY

Many coal companies in Kentucky offer tours of working surface and underground mines on a limited basis. Examples of four company tours are presented below.

Amax Coal Company, which has operations in Kentucky, offers a tour near Evansville, Indiana, at the Ayrshire Mine. This is a surface mine tour that lasts approximately two hours, using the company's own seventeen-passenger tour bus. Groups or individuals interested in taking one of these tours are required to submit reservations and make arrangements in advance. No tours are offered in Kentucky by Amax.

Southeast Coal Company in Eastern Kentucky offers a tour of their processing facility in Irvine. The groups eligible to take such a tour are those seriously interested in some aspect of coal mining. The sites visited include the machine shop, equipment area, and facilities where coal is washed. Southeast Coal Company also offers coal mine tours in Letcher County. Touring groups are limited to ten people and prior arrangements must be made with the company office. The tour begins with participants attending a lecture which may range from ten minutes to two hours, depending on how much the group wants to learn about coal mining. Following the lecture a guided tour of a deep mine is conducted, lasting from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half.

Peabody Coal Company in Western Kentucky has an involved procedure for setting up tours of their surface mines. The groups or individuals wanting to tour a Peabody Mine should send a written request to the company specifying the date, the number of participants, and what mine site the group would like to visit. That letter is sent to Peabody Coal Company's headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, and must be approved by a number of vice presidents; then it is forwarded to the appropriate mine superintendent in Kentucky.

Beth Elkhorn Coal Company in Eastern Kentucky offers tours of an underground mine and preparation plant in Jenkins. Reservations and alternate dates must be submitted in advance.

Section 4. Staff services to be utilized in completing this study are estimated to cost twelve thousand dollars ($12,000). These staff services shall be provided from the regular commission budget and are subject to the limitations and other research responsibilities of the commission.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION recommending the establishment of the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum.

WHEREAS, Kentucky is the nation's leading coal producer; and

WHEREAS, coal has been an extremely valuable resource throughout the history of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, coal has played an integral role in the development of the culture of the state; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum Feasibility and Planning Study concluded that a coal mining museum and exhibition mine located at the abandoned U. S. Steel Mine 32 on Black Mountain in Harlan County, Kentucky, is desirable and would be self-supporting; and

WHEREAS, the museum and exhibition mine would be a valuable cultural and educational asset;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Senate concurring therein:

That the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum be established at the abandoned U. S. Steel Mine 32 on Black Mountain in Harlan County, Kentucky.

FOREWORD

The lives and traditions of Kentucky coal miners are an important American legacy. Kentuckians wish to preserve this heritage, the artifacts and lore of the mines, for future generations. To this end, the 1978 General Assembly (in Senate Bill 71) directed the Legislative Research Commission to study the feasibility and desirability of establishing a coal museum either in eastern or western Kentucky, or both.

The following study, responding to that resolution, is presented as a preliminary report, in that it recommends establishment of a special commission for the purpose of determining what sort of coal museum(s) Kentucky needs. On January 2, 1979, after the final draft of this study had been submitted and edited, Governor Julian Carroll created a Governor's Task Force on State Parks Development. Perhaps this body will undertake recommendations regarding a Kentucky coal attraction.

The report was prepared by Linda Kubala and Brent Neiser of the LRC staff. The cooperation of photographer Tom Eisert of the Island Creek Coal Company is gratefully acknowledged.

VIC HELLARD, JR.
Director

The Capitol
Frankfort, Kentucky
March, 1979

APPENDIX 1

A RESOLUTION directing the Legislative Research Commission to conduct a study of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a museum in Eastern Kentucky which would focus on the unique traditions of Appalachian Kentucky, with special emphasis on the role of the coal miner in 20th century mountain life, and a museum in Western Kentucky with special emphasis on the role of the coal miner in 20th century rural Western Kentucky.

WHEREAS, the underground coal miner has exhibited steadfast courage and willpower to labor at an occupation under trying and often dangerous conditions; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of the coal miner has been handed down from father to son over the decades; and

WHEREAS, the underground coal miner has sacrificed life and limb to provide heat and light for the people of the nation; and

WHEREAS, the coal miner is an inseparable part of the culture of Appalachian Kentucky, having contributed to the development of its distinctive nature; and

WHEREAS, the folklore and artifacts of the underground coal miner should be preserved for future Kentuckians as a reminder of the coal miners' enduring contribution to the Appalachian way-of-life;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. That the Legislative Research Commission is directed to conduct a study of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a museum in Eastern Kentucky which would focus on the unique traditions of Appalachian Kentucky, with special emphasis on the role of the coal miner in 20th century mountain life.

Section 2. That the Legislative Research Commission is also directed to conduct a study of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a museum in Western Kentucky which would focus on the history of coal mining in Western Kentucky.

Section 3. That this study, including its findings and recommendations, be completed by June 1, 1979.

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APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SUMMARY

Kentuckians have long been interested in developing a coal museum or a tourist attraction with a coal mining theme. Nearby states have established successful mining museums, mine tours, and similar attractions, and many feel that Kentucky, with her eastern and western coal fields, with her forty-nine coal-producing counties, is long overdue such a tribute to her contribution to the history of coal in America.

This report explores several alternatives for state involvement in the development of a coal museum. Such an attraction could take various forms, each of which appeals to a somewhat different audience and has different costs and locational requirements. A traditional museum, a building with exhibits about coal mining or miners, could be an attractive asset to its host community, but, unless located near another attraction, it might not draw many tourists. Exhibition mines are popular and lucrative attractions in other states, but none has been developed in Kentucky. An ambitious coal museum attraction could include such a mine, as well as a restored company town, exhibits, and other facilities. Kentucky will have to choose the sort of project it wishes to undertake. Its choice will no doubt be influenced by an examination of the costs and the effectiveness of the wide range of existing facilities in other states.

Two relatively small Kentucky coal exhibits opened to the public in recent months: one is a display at Breaks Interstate Park; the other is a Historymobile exhibit by the Kentucky Historical Society. And there are a number of current proposals for coal-based attractions in Kentucky. The Corps of Engineers has completed initial studies for restoration of an abandoned mining community, Blue Heron, in McCreary County. Studies also have been completed, and considerable support obtained, for opening an exhibition mine and museum near Lynch in Harlan County. In addition to these specific projects, coal museums are planned or proposed in Ashland, Pike County, Muhlenberg County, and several other locations.

Representatives of both industry and labor have expressed support for a Kentucky coal museum. Money and technical assistance for museums are available from federal agencies, and might be obtained for a state coal museum.

Kentucky may choose to offer limited support to some promising local project, or to develop instead a Kentucky museum or coal park. Difficult locational decisions must be made if the state becomes involved in any project, however, and it may be necessary to select sites in both eastern and western coal regions.

Prospects for a coal museum are encouraging, and the subject certainly merits further investigation. **It is recommended that the Governor and the LRC appoint a special commission of legislators, local officials, and other key persons to pursue the matter. This commission should consider questions of size and complexity, funding, theme, and location for a museum, and present its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.**

FOOTNOTES

1. Luckett and Farley, Inc., *Kentucky Coal Mining Museum Feasibility Study* (Louisville, Ky.: 1977), p. 8.

2. G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1975), p. 9.

3. The American Association of Museums, *America's Museums: The Belmont Report* (Washington, D. C.: American Association of Museums, 1969), p. 9.

4. Letter from David Johns, Butte, Montana, May 8, 1978.

5. Land Development Analysts, Inc., *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area: General Design Memorandum, Appendix III—Report on Blue Heron Mine* (Nashville: Corps of Engineers, 1975), p. 65.

6. Land Development Analysts, pp. 66-67.

7. Luckett and Farley, p. 3.

8. Luckett and Farley, p. 8.

9. Ibid.

the location selected. Conversations with the staff of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum emphasized the care they have taken to develop themes and exhibits which speak to desired audiences. The themes of Eckley Village—the daily lives of coal miners and their families, and the contribution of ethnic groups—lend themselves to community involvement as well as tourism. The machinery exhibits at Ashland, Pennsylvania, emphasizing technology, show a very different aspect of the industry. The coal mine tour at Beckley, West Virginia, graphically demonstrating what it is like to work in the mines, holds a particular attraction for thousands of miners and their families.

Members of the coal industry have offered various types of support for a museum project in Kentucky. Such support understandably stipulates that exhibits project a postive, or at least neutral, image of the industry. Some visitors may also want to see something of the negative image of the industry, as suggested by the phrase "Bloody Harlan," or the songs "Daddy Won't You Take Me Back To Muhlenberg County," and "Sixteen Tons." Any extreme, of course, might compromise the state's responsibility for balance and fairness.

A state coal museum can be an asset to the state, a source of pride for Kentuckians, and an attraction for visitors. If the idea is to be pursued, the next step should be to bring together key people for the purpose of developing concrete proposals. It is hoped that the information in this study will prove useful in that endeavor.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

More than half of the tourists who register at the Kentucky State Visitors Center in Pineville ask to see a coal mine.[1] The time when such curiosity may be satisfied is surely not far away. Since tourism is our fastest growing industry, and since Kentucky leads the country in coal production, it is not surprising to find an eagerness to combine the assets of coal and tourism by creating a Kentucky coal museum or a recreational facility dedicated to coal mining. What is surprising is that neighboring states have such facilities and Kentucky doesn't.

In response to this situation, the 1978 General Assembly passed Senate Resolution No. 71, directing the Legislative Research Commission to study the feasibility and desirability of establishing a coal museum in Kentucky. The resolution specifies study of propects for: 1) a museum in eastern Kentucky which would focus on the unique traditions of Appalachian Kentucky, with special emphasis on the role of the coal miner in 20th century mountain life; and 2) a museum in western Kentucky which would focus on the history of coal mining in that region. The present study is a product of that resolution.

A second resolution, House Resolution 88, was also taken into account as this study was undertaken. This resolution urges that a Kentucky Coal Mining Museum be established at the abandoned U.S. Steel Mine 32 on Black Mountain in Harlan County. Copies of both resolutions are found in Appendix 1.

Senate Resolution 71 does not specify a particular kind of museum, and it was early apparent that a major focus of this study would be on the type of museum desired. Mobile exhibits, mine tours, and even restored "coal camps" might all be called coal museums. Most proponents of a Kentucky coal museum, however, anticipate a rather elaborate undertaking, envisioning a combination of exhibits and rides or other facilities attractive to visitors. The choice of the type of museum will, of course, determine the costs of building and operating, locational requirements, and the number and type of visitors to be anticipated.

Initial research uncovered plans for coal museums or tourist attractions in various parts of the state. These projects represent the scope of local interest in the museum idea and the variety of prospects

for possible state development. It was felt that these should be included in any study of the feasibility of a museum.

For these reasons the study explores a range of alternatives rather than analyzing the feasibility and selecting a location for a specific museum project. Factors that must be considered if the state decides to support a museum or museums are discussed, and facilities in other states are described. It is hoped that this information will be useful to those faced with the decision of whether to support the development of coal museums in the state.

Most of the information used in this report was obtained through recent interviews with state and local officials, museum curators, and other interested groups. Written inquiries were made to museums in other states. Personal visits were made to five facilities in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and to several sites in Kentucky.

The report is divided into four sections. The first discusses requirements for several types of coal museum, based on representative facilities in other states. This is followed by a description of nine coal museum projects in Kentucky, including the two exhibits currently in operation. The third section reports responses from several interested groups, and identifies potential sources of support for a Kentucky museum project. Finally, several alternatives for state involvement are discussed, and recommendations for further action are offered.

A first task of the commission might well be to recommend a level of state involvement in a coal project. This study has suggested several alternatives. State officials might express strong support for the federal development of the Blue Heron mining community, and see that this project is carried through. Or they could provide limited support for one of the local projects already underway, without taking prime responsibility for development or operation of the facility. Or the state, probably through the Department of Parks, could build a state-owned and operated facility dedicated to coal. This could be as small as an exhibit room, or as large as a fully-equipped state park.

The location of a coal museum is a touchy issue. Coal is mined in forty-nine Kentucky counties. Most of these counties, at one time or another, have pursued the idea of setting up a coal museum or mine tour. It is safe to say that if the state expressed interest in building a coal museum, at least half of these counties would compete actively for it. There would be regional competition between the eastern and western coalfields, and it is entirely possible that not one but two locations would be selected for state-financed or assisted development. The commission would be helpful in working out proposals acceptable to all parties.

Location is not solely a political question, and decisions must also be based on the accessibility and economic potential of various sites. In this context, the commission must consider whether the main goal is the success of the facility itself, or the museum's value for educational or community development purposes.

Sites with the greatest immediate economic potential lie along the main traffic arteries, near existing recreational areas, and within easy reach of the populations of large cities. These areas already draw tourists, and they already have the motels, campsites and restaurants to serve visitors.

Many of the sites which have been proposed do not have these locational advantages, and at least initially could not attract as many visitors. However, such facilities might profit from strong local support. They could become a focus for community involvement and serve as a catalyst for the economic development of the area. Some sites have unique characteristics; an authentic company town or deep mine cannot simply be transported to a plot on the expressway. Factors such as these may pursuade the commission to choose sites which do not promise immediately to draw the maximum in visitors or revenue.

Selection of a theme or themes for the project is another task for the commission. The theme and the success with which it is developed are as critical to a museum project as the amount of money spent or

CHAPTER V

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATE INVOLVEMENT

This report has outlined several possible kinds of coal museum, described projects which already have been proposed or carried out in Kentucky, and identified groups which could assist in developing a museum. Several mining museums developed in surrounding states and attracting large numbers of visitors have been discussed, as have mine tours, with their great potential for drawing crowds and making money.

The findings of this study are encouraging in that they underscore the potential for a coal museum or coal-related attraction in Kentucky. But real study of feasibility can be made only for a well-defined proposal. Considerable work still needs to be done, including decisions about the size, purpose, funding, theme, audience and location for the facility. These decisions are at least as political as they are academic; there is a need to balance the interests of different regions, and of industry, labor, and government agencies, in order to arrive at a fair and viable proposal. Those involved in this process should be people with authority to act or obtain action on their proposals. For these reasons it appears that further work should be handled by a group selected to represent the interested parties, rather than be assigned solely to the staff of a state agency or to a consultant. [The study was effectively complete and its conclusions formulated before Governor Julian Carroll created (Executive Order 79-23, January 2, 1979) his Task Force on State Parks Development, charged with determining "the long range requirements of tourist and recreational facilities throughout the Commonwealth" and examining questions regarding the "locating and developing" of these facilities. A Kentucky coal attraction could well be one of the first subjects this body will study.]

The primary recommendation of this report is that a special commission be created to carry out the initial planning for a coal museum, and that this commission report its recommendations to the governor and the Legislative Research Commission prior to the 1980 Session of the General Assembly. Commission members should include legislators from the coal regions, interested local officials, and representatives from labor, the coal industry, and key state agencies. Staff services might be provided through the Development Cabinet, which includes the Departments of Parks and Tourism.

CHAPTER II

OPTIONS—TYPES OF COAL MUSEUM

A coal museum can be structured in an almost unlimited number of ways. It could be a collection of donated artifacts displayed in a state park lodge, or a multi-million dollar complex with restored buildings, tipple and mine tours, demonstrations, on-site accommodations, and shops. It could be mobile, like the Historical Society's Historymobile, and take its exhibits to local communities and schools. It could aim primarily to attract out-of-state tourists and their money, or could place primary emphasis on informing Kentuckians about a part of their heritage. With so many possibilities, it is safe to say that various combinations of size, organization, themes and locations would make both feasible and desirable projects for state involvement. But an actual feasibility study can be undertaken only after a project and location have been specified.

This chapter characterizes several types of coal musuems which might be built in Kentucky. Although the discussion is general, it identifies factors which must be considered by those faced with a decision on the subject. Existing museums in other states are used as examples of various options.

Museum Structure with Exhibits

Most persons who read the term "coal museum" probably think of a building with exhibits and pictures about coal mining. The establishment of this type of museum certainly is one alternative available to the state.

In this context it is useful to differentiate between the exhibits shown by a museum and the museum as a type of research and educational institution. The International Council of Museums defines a museum as "any permanent institution which conserves and displays for purposes of study, education, and enjoyment collections of objects of cultural or scientific significance."[2] A museum often operates exhibits at several locations, yet remains a single institution. As an example, the Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex, discussed later in this chapter, operates two museum structures, a restored coal town, and an archeological site.

Museums do not exist primarly to entertain, but rather to make educational use of collections. If the object is to develop tourism in an area, a traditional museum, as such, may be a poor choice. To attract significant numbers of tourists, a museum must either be very big and famous, must include attractions primarily for entertainment, or must be located where tourists already congregate.

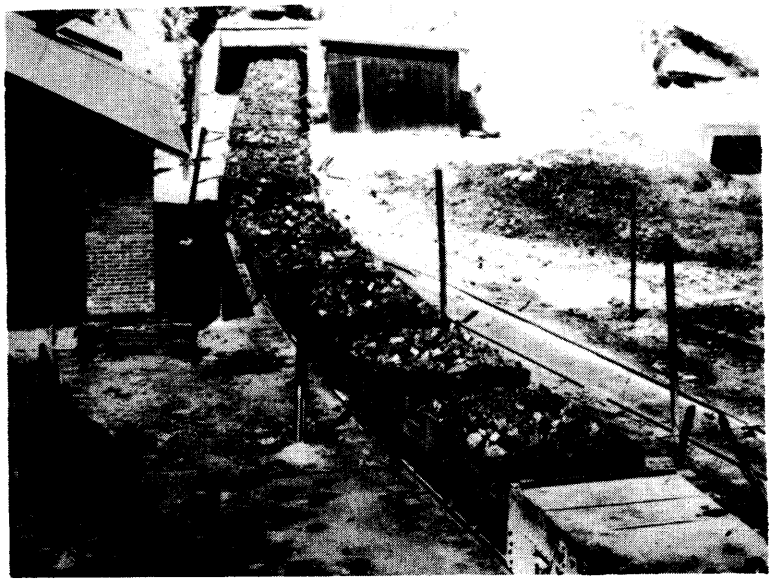
This does not mean that a conventional museum would have no impact on tourism in an area. The exhibits in a museum can enhance the visitor's understanding of an area, which is one reason why interpretive exhibits so often are found in visitor areas of parks. A museum is one more thing to see, and may prolong a visitor's stay in an area.

The real advantage of establishing a coal museum, however, would accrue to the community through the museum's activities of research, preservation, and education. Members of the staff must interpret the significance of artifacts for the public and must learn as much as possible about their subject in order to create a meaningful exhibit.

The history of coal mining in Kentucky, its impact on life in both the eastern and western coal fields, the story of the labor movement, contributions made by immigrants brought in to mine coal in the early years of this century—these themes have been only partially explored by historians and social scientists. It may be that the coal industry and controversies surrounding it still are too real to be studied dispassionately as history. On the other hand, it may also be that a focus for such research is lacking. This focus could be provided by a coal museum dedicated to collecting and interpreting objects, pictures, oral histories and documents related to coal mining.

A museum is an important educational asset to a community. Most educational institutions teach with words, whereas the principal educational tools of a museum are objects. A well-designed museum exhibit can teach, tell a story, leave an impression more vivid than any book.

> Probably the chief claim for the importance of museums as educational institutions lies in the objects they collect and protect. They use objects—original evidence usually available only in a musuem—to tell the dramatic story of earth through time, of life on the earth and of how man himself evolved, worked, dreamed and created. It is a story that can be told by words, but words cannot have the impact of an



Exterior of an Underground Mine

locating equipment and simulating mine conditions should prove helpful to those planning a coal museum or exhibition mine.

Audio-Visual Resources

Films on mine safety, mining techniques and mining technology are available from the United States Department of Interior's Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration in Pittsburgh.

Appalshop, Inc., in Whitesburg, has produced over thirty films, currently in distribution, covering many aspects of mountain life, including the impact of the coal industry on the region and on the individual. These films are available for purchase by the public.

Island Creek Coal Company in Lexington has an eight-screen rear projection multi-media presentation on coal which can be set up like a small theater. This exhibit could possibly be used on a loan basis in a coal museum.

reconstruction. If an area is designated as a historic district, low cost loans and grants are available for renovation or preservation.

Recently the Heritage Commission has been looking for an old coal camp or coal town that could be nominated as a historic district. In the past very little of their grant money has gone to eastern Kentucky. The staff is currently looking at the possibility of nominating the town of Lynch in Harlan County as a historic district.

National Coal Association

The National Coal Association in Washington, D.C., through its education division, is willing to assist Kentucky in its development of a coal attraction. This assistance would take the form of resource identification and other technical help.

Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)

The Historic American Engineering Record, formerly part of the National Parks Service, is now a division of the reorganized Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. HAER can provide technical assistance to states interested in identifying significant historic industrial sites. It maintains an archive of information on industrial sites of historic interest. Much of this information is obtained through a cooperative inventory program in conjunction with states or regions.

If a state or region is interested in surveying its historic industrial sites, HAER will provide technical expertise, training, survey forms and supplies; it also publishes the completed inventories on such sites. Usually these surveys are initiated and funded by state historic preservation offices, using federal survey and planning money. HAER also assists states in developing or preserving specific sites. To date Kentucky has not participated in this program.

Kentucky Vocational Schools

Vocational schools in Harlan, Hazard, Pikeville and Madisonville are offering programs in underground mine equipment maintenance and operations. These programs use equipment donated by manufacturers and coal companies, much of it on a loan basis. In 1979 simulated mines will be completed at the four vocational schools to teach mining and safety techniques to new and experienced miners, as required by federal law. The cost of the Madisonville simulated mine is estimated at $500,000. The experience of the vocational schools in

> object that is original evidence, whether it is a painting by Rembrandt, the fossil of a creature that existed 80 million years ago, or George Washington's home at Mount Vernon. Moreover, only a part of education is formal. Many of our most educational experiences take place outside the classroom. Voluntary learning, as a part of a family group, can be a powerful adjunct to formal education.[3]

A coal museum could provide tours for school classes and other interested groups. It could develop special exhibits for loan to schools, and could maintain displays in selected state parks or other tourist areas.

Eighty percent of the operating costs of museums typically goes to pay salaries. If facilities must be built, however, the initial investment could be high. The bulk of most museum collections comes free, through loan or donation. A number of collections in private or local hands might become available if a coal museum were established. Moreover, industry representatives have indicated a willingness to donate materials to a museum, if one is established. Some of these resources are treated in Chapter 4.

The cost of building and operating a coal museum can be estimated only after questions of size, location and function have been decided. The Kentucky Department of Parks operates several museums as part of the state system of parks and shrines. Annual costs for operating these museums, excluding costs for utilities and general maintenance, ranged in 1976-77 from $3,682 for the small mountain-life museum at Levi Jackson State Park to $165,000 for operating of restored Fort Boonesboro. The latter includes not just the fort and collected artifacts, but continual live demonstrations of many traditional Kentucky crafts.

The Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex

The Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex is an ambitious project by the State of Pennsylvania to interpret for the public the history of anthracite mining in the state, as well as to integrate several state properties under a single administration.

Development of the Anthracite Museum began in 1969, when a non-profit citizens group purchased the picturesque mining company town, Eckley, and gave title to the state with the stipulation that it be developed into a living museum. Land also was donated by the city of

Ashland for a museum to complement its existing coal mine tour. Scranton donated a reclaimed strip mine site for a museum. The Museum also operates a historic iron furnace site in downtown Scranton.

To date between $7 and $8 million has been spent for capital construction, including two museum buildings and extensive renovation and construction at Eckley. All of the sites should be open, at least on a limited basis, within the next year. The development of permanent exhibits, and the development of Eckley, however, will continue for many years.

The museum at Scranton is located on a reclaimed strip mine which now is a city park. It is adjacent to a demonstration mine being constructed by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, which will be a major attraction for visitors to the area. The Scranton museum contains 25,000 square feet of exhibit area, plus administrative offices for the Anthracite Complex, and facilities for maintenance, repair, and storage. At the present time the building houses a temporary exhibit on transportation in the region. The building will continue to house temporary exhibits developed by the staff, which should encourage repeat visits. Permanent exhibits may be developed at a later time.

The museum at Ashland, Pennsylvania is also located adjacent to a coal mine tour. The Pioneer Tunnel at Ashland is operated by the city, and the museum will complement this attraction. The building contains only 5,500 square feet of exhibit space, but eventually machinery, mine cars and other equipment are to be set up for display outside the actual museum. The permanent exhibits being developed for this museum will focus on the technology of anthracite mining, and will feature the techniques and machines used for drilling, prospecting, timbering and ventilating mines.

The village of Eckley, as a restored coal town, is described in detail in a later section of this chapter.

The Museum Complex currently receives an annual appropriation of $325,000; about ⅔ of this amount is used for personnel costs for a staff of twenty. Most of the staff work is directed now towards creating accurate and educational exhibits, which includes researching the mining era using oral interviews and documents, and obtaining artifacts for display. Although state funds are budgeted for purchase of objects, many artifacts are donated, or are borrowed from other museums. The museum does not have an advertising budget at this time. It appears that only minimal advertising is planned, even after the facilities go into full operation.

Division of Tourism Development and Department of Tourism

During the preparation of this study, it has been assumed that the development of a coal museum would not specifically be the province of any particular state agency. The creation of a Department of Tourism, mandated by the General Assembly during the 1978 Session, changes things, however.

Senate Bill 305 creates a division in the Department of Commerce devoted to tourism development. This will be followed in July 1979 by a Department of Tourism, charged with coordinating and promoting all aspects of the tourist industry in the Commonwealth.

Functions of the new department which are specified in SB 305 include:

- assisting local communities and businessmen in the tourist field to enhance local tourist industry development;
- studying the state's tourism needs by area, conducting feasibility studies, analyzing the economic potential of markets, making traveler studies, analyzing resources and other relevant matters; and
- coordinating programs which provide technical management assistance and other matters directed toward promotion of state tourism.

This new department is the most logical agency to pursue work on a coal museum. It could look at cooperative ventures with local groups as a possible compromise between creating a state facility and doing nothing at all. It could consider historic, aesthetic and recreational requirements for a facility, and at least in theory pull together expertise in different areas from established agencies. The Departments of Parks, Public Information, and Mines and Minerals, the Historical Society, and the Heritage Commission could all make valuable contributions to a project such as this, yet all are limited in some way. The new Division of Tourism in the Department of Commerce, and its successor, the Department of Tourism, should be able to provide the overview and coordination needed.

Kentucky Heritage Commission

The Kentucky Heritage Commission, headquartered in Frankfort, acts as a distributing agency for federal and state grant money available for buildings on the National Historical Register or buildings in a historic district. Much of this money is available for planning, or in special cases, rehabilitation work, interior redesign and

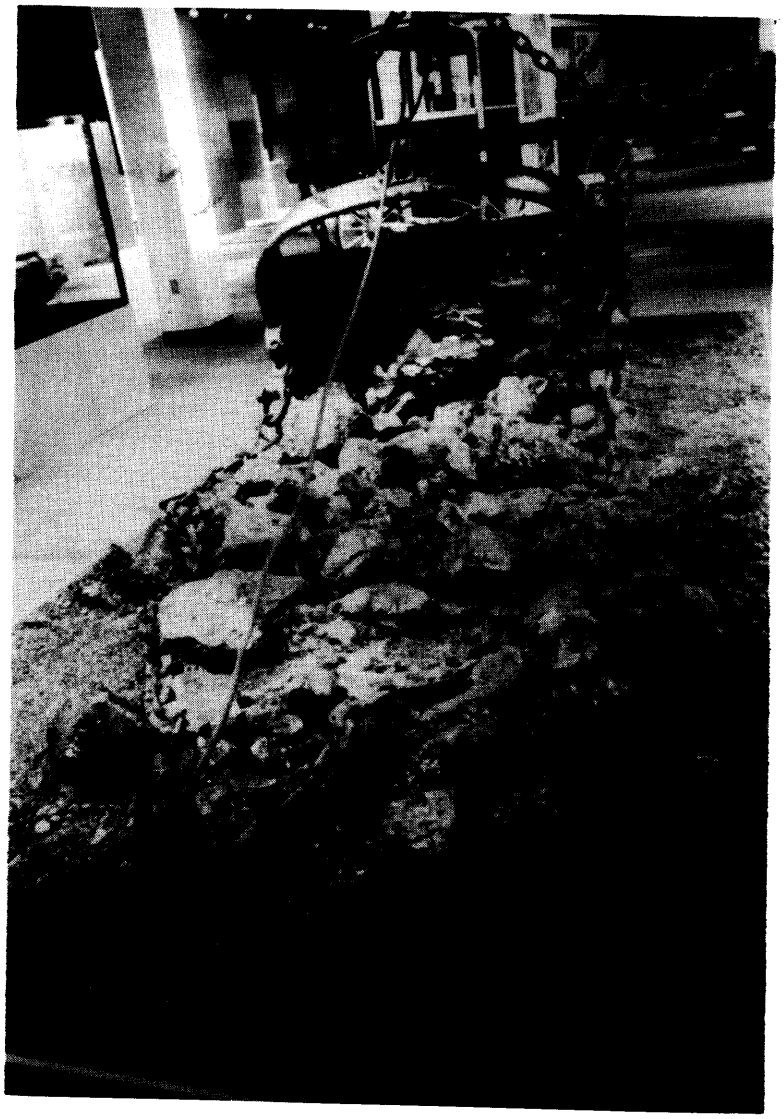
2. Miners from Kentucky would probably visit the coal museum out of curiosity, but their main interest would be in touring an exhibition mine with their families.

3. Lamps, hats, breast augers and films or slides of how coal was mined in the "old days" would make good exhibits in the museum. Many surface miners have no idea how different types of undergound mining equipment actually operate, and undergound miners don't understand many of the techniques of surface mining. In order to properly exhibit these techniques and uses of equipment, audio-visual devices should be used in conjunction with displays of actual equipment.

4. The facility should honor the miner in a way that highlights his contributions to society as well as those of his family. Too many people outside the coalfields look upon the miner as a "dumb brute," when in reality mining is a vital, demanding, and highly skilled occupation. Miners indeed are proud men, which facility exhibits should emphasize. "Proud to Be a Miner," the United Mine Worker's slide show history of the union, might thus be very effective in a coal museum.

State-Operated Museums

No single agency in state government is charged with developing or coordinating museums throughout the state. However, both the Department of Parks and the Historical Society operate museums. The Department of Parks is responsible for a number of museums located in state parks, and for operation of state shrines, such as White Hall or the William Whitley House. The Historical Society operates two museums in Frankfort as well as the Historymobile program. The experience and expertise of these agencies will be valuable at all stages of planning a coal museum. Indeed, both agencies provided suggestions and assistance for this initial study.



Bucket Display, Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex

In some ways, the Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex could serve as a model for development of a Kentucky museum. However, Pennsylvania is not Kentucky, and differences must be taken into account. One important difference is accessiblity. The Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum sites are located around Scranton, in east-central Pennsylvania. The sites lie close to major interstates in or near large cities, and in a heavily-populated region. Kentucky's coal fields are less accessible. The western fields are crossed by north-south tourist routes, but are fairly distant from large population centers. Interstates scarcely penetrate the eastern coal fields.

The Pennsylvania anthracite industry is primarily of historical interest; coal remains very much a force in Kentucky. On the one hand this may mean that in Kentucky coal lacks the nostalgic appeal which draws so many to the anthracite exhibits. On the other hand, a strong industry might be more willing to contribute to a museum project if one is proposed.

Tour of a Coal Mine

Tours of actual coal mines are among the most popular exhibits with mining area visitors. Tours of underground mines are provided as tourist attractions in several places in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia. Some of these support themselves completely through sale of tickets and concession receipts. A tour does not even have to take visitors into a real mine; the simulated coal mine at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry is one of the museum's most popular attractions, accommodating 600,000 visitors each year.

The popularity of coal mine tours lies in the combination of education with entertainment. Descriptions do not easily convey what it is like in a mine, and few people outside the industry have a clear picture of a miner's work, his environment, or tools. Several mining companies in Kentucky allow small groups to tour working mines for special purposes. Procedures used by these companies are described in Appendix 3. But working mines are dangerous, and space is limited; thus it is impossible to provide such public tours as those available in automobile factories or distilleries. In many cases, even the families of miners have never had the chance to see the inside of a mine.

Further, the cost of operating a mine for tourists can be substantial. The mine must be opened and made safe for visitors; obviously some mines with thin seams, unstable roofs or ventilation problems cannot be used at all. A simulated mine could be built more cheaply

CHAPTER IV

SUPPORT GROUPS

A number of organizations not previously mentioned could provide assistance or support for a coal museum. These include industry groups which might organize support for a project, organizations with expertise or funds to help implement it, and sources of collections, models and films. Several of these groups are discussed below.

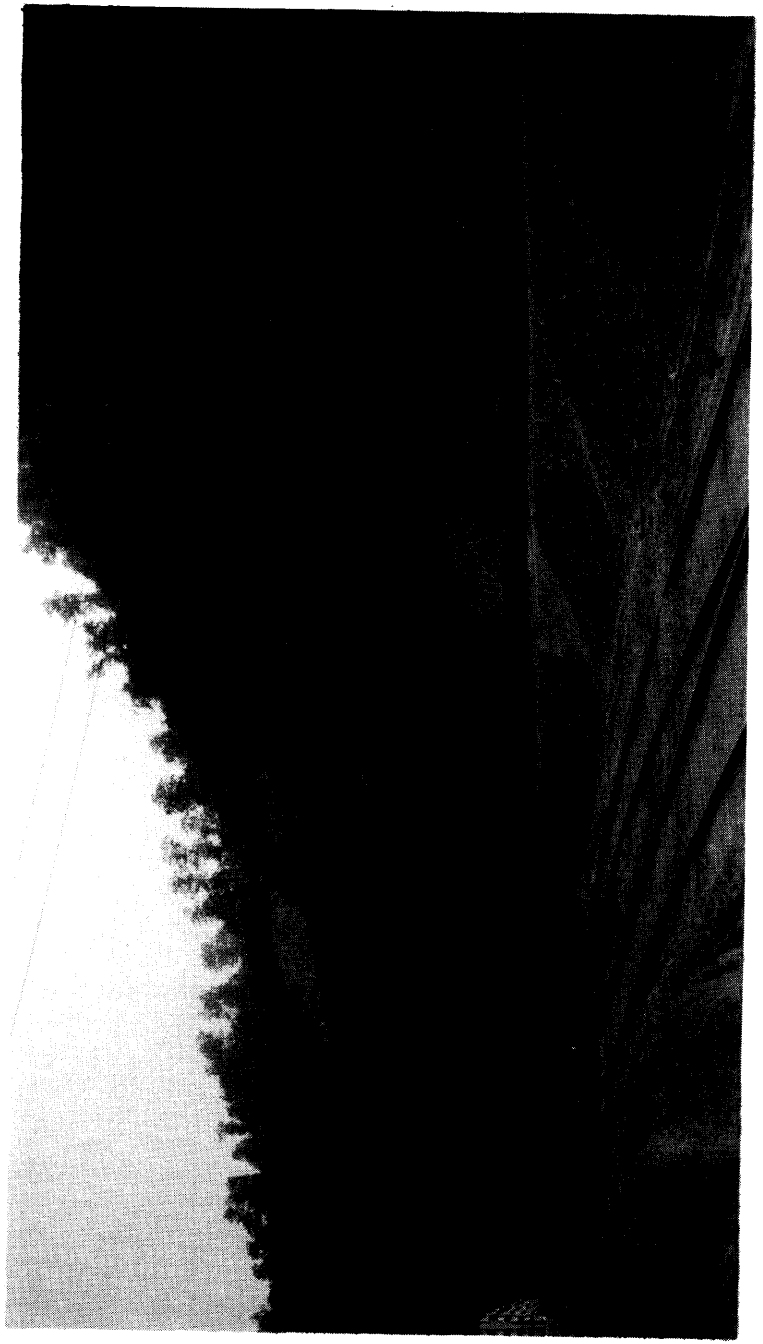
Kentucky Coal Association

The Kentucky Coal Association is the major trade association and spokesman for the coal industry in the state. Members include companies in both eastern and western Kentucky. Associate members include banks, accounting firms, insurance companies and industrial suppliers who are involved with the coal industry. The association is concerned with two major aspects of any proposed coal museum: theme and location. Because of the geographic diversity of its membership, the association is currently not supporting any particular site or sites for the museum. As to theme, it feels that the museum exhibits should be representative of the whole history of the coal industry and not concentrate on events or practices which would show the industry in a negative light. A balanced viewpoint could be achieved if a screening committee could review the exhibits as they are proposed and if the museum is designed in phases, so that not all of the exhibits are put together at one time. A timetable for the opening and development of various exhibits should be established, in order for the museum to gradually build up its credibility. A final suggestion was that mining equipment manufacturers could be sources for donations of models and equipment.

United Mine Workers of America

Recent discussions with officials of the United Mine Workers District 30 in Pikeville regarding the present study elicited the following suggestions:

1. The theme and contents of any museum or exhibition mine should be attractive and interesting to the coal miner.



Early Coal Tipple

in some regions than abandoned local mines could be made safe for tourists. In addition to the mine, a tour project must acquire tour vehicles and the equipment to be exhibited inside the mine, hire tour guides, and probably construct buildings outside the mine to house interpretive exhibits and concessions.

The Chicago Museum of Science and Industry Coal Mine Exhibit

In 1933, the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago opened its first major exhibit, which was an exhibition coal mine. This coal mine is completely man-made and is housed inside the museum building. It is a full-scale replica of a southern Illinois coal mine. It shows visitors how coal is taken from the earth and explains mine safety procedures. Visitors actually descend into the mine in a hoist and ride a mine train within. Approximately 600,000 visitors tour the coal mine each year, making it by far the most popular coal-related exhibit in the United States. Operating costs include six guides, who also serve as lecturers, one cashier, one maintenance man, janitorial services, and utilities. Since the mine is operated as part of the museum, meaningful cost figures are not available for the mine itself.

Beckley, West Virginia, Exhibition Coal Mine

The Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine was opened to visitors in 1962. The mine, originally worked in the 1890's, is located in a Beckley city park and operated by the city parks and recreation department.

Tours of the Beckley Mine run about thirty-five minutes and are conducted by old-time miners. Visitors ride converted railroad cars such as those used in working mines. At each tour stop, the guide discusses one aspect of bituminous coal mining; i.e., ventilation, roof bolting, general working conditions in mining and loading. Machinery is displayed in different parts of the mine.

A recently added "tour guides room" outside the mine displays numerous artifacts and photographs on mining, and includes a model of a tipple. Many of the artifacts on display were donated either by coal companies or by miners and their families. A gift shop and concession stand are also located at the mine.

The exhibition mine is open May through September. Tickets cost $2.25 for adults and $1.25 for children. The mine attracted approximately 48,000 visitors last year.

Mining Artifacts on Display, Beckley, West Virginia

The Beckley mine has been profitable from the beginning. Last year the facility generated approximately $101,000 revenue, and had an operating budget of $80,000. Extensive advertising ($18,000 budgeted last year), location in the city, and proximity to Interstate 77 contribute to the financial success of this operation.

U.S. Bureau of Mines Pennsylvania Demonstration Mine

The Pennsylvania Demonstration Mine is currently being constructed adjacent to the Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Building in Scranton. About $2 million has been spent on this project; funds have come from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the United States Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, and the Pennsylvania Community Development Office. The original intention of this project was to demonstrate one use of abandoned strip mine land; the Bureau of Mines developed a park on this land about five years ago. Recently, an additional $1 million was appropriated for the U. S. Bureau of Mines to create a tramway tour on the site. The tramway, which is currently under construction, will take visitors into a deep mine.

might include the impact of mining on folk culture and the works of prominent folk singers from the county, such as Merle Travis. Supporters are confident that the industry would assist in developing the museum, and that artifacts would be donated by county residents if a museum were established. Greenville lies close to the Western Kentucky Parkway, seventeen miles east of the Pennyrile Parkway.

This chapter has described the two coal attractions currently operating in Kentucky and seven other proposed coal attractions in the early planning stages. Appendix 4 is a map of Kentucky showing the location of these sites.

As a potential tourist attraction, Wheelwright's problem is accessibility. It lies at the southern tip of Floyd County, an hour's drive on mountain roads from Prestonsburg, at the end of a road which goes to Wheelwright and nowhere else. Wheelwright's uniqueness draws some visitors even now, but a tourist facility, envisioned in this case as a tool for economic development, probably would not draw enough visitors to warrant the investment.

Madisonville—Hopkins County

There appears to be a long-standing interest in this western Kentucky area for developing a tourist attraction based on the local coal industry. During the 1960's local enthusiasts proposed to build a coal camp and simulated mine on U.S. Highway 41 south of Madisonville, primarily to attract interstate tourists traveling north or south along that route. Although favored by many local businessmen and the Madisonville Chamber of Commerce, the idea never gained sufficient financial support.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife recently obtained a large tract of strip-mined land adjoining the Pennyrile Parkway a few miles south of Madisonville. The 5,500-acre tract was purchased primarily for use as a wildlife management area, but plans to use part of the area for a coal museum are being discussed. The tract contains "orphan banks" (unreclaimed strip-mine land), reclaimed land, and old underground mines; exhibits could be developed to show the public about mining and reclamation methods. The project still is in the early stages of development.

Muhlenberg County

Muhlenberg County has been the largest coal producing county for a number of years. The history of mining in the county dates back to the 1820's, and it was the site of the first strip mining in the state. Over the years there have been repeated initiatives by residents to establish a coal museum in the county.

Renewed interest in a coal museum has been stimulated by the availability of the old Greenville High School building in the county seat. (Classes have been moved to new quarters, so the old high school structure is no longer used.) A group is presently being formed in Greenville to explore the possibility of using the now vacant building as a site for a museum. Specific exhibits have not been planned, but

The Pennsylvania mine tour is the only demonstration of its kind financed by the federal government; the U. S. Bureau of Mines has no plans to fund other similar projects.

Pioneer Coal Mine Tunnel, Ashland, Pennsylvania

The Pioneer Coal Mine Tunnel in Ashland, Pennsylvania, was opened in 1963 by a non-profit organization called Ashland Community Enterprises. The city of Ashland contributed $24,000 to the project, and a loan of $42,900 was obtained from the Area Redevelopment Administration to open the tour. Ashland lies about forty miles south of Scranton, near Interstate 81.

Pioneer Tunnel is a drift mine, a horizontal tunnel driven from the surface that follows the coal seam. The main attraction is a thirty-minute coal mine tour in which visitors ride in electric-powered open cars. For part of the tour, visitors walk with the guide, who tells the history of anthracite coal mining in the region and describes the mining process. The Pioneer Tunnel facility also includes an old-fashioned steam locomotive ride of about ¾ mile along the mountain. Visitors see a small bootleg mine, used by local residents to obtain coal during the Depression, and strip mining sites. Other facilities at the site are a gift shop and concession area.

The gross income from the entire facility was $155,000 last year, which is about ten percent above the operating costs. Since the facility is non-profit, these earnings are returned to improve and expand the facilities. Major costs are wages, $70,000, and insurance, $11,500 per year.

Pioneer Tunnel is open every day from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and on weekends in May, September and October. The mine tour costs $2.75 for adults, $1.25 for children. The locomotive ride is $.75 and $.50 respectively. Last year 35,000 people toured the mine, and 20,000 took the train ride.

The Ashland museum, operated by the Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex (described above), is adjacent to the Pioneer Tunnel. These facilities will complement each other when the museum opens for visitors in the near future.

Mine tours appear popular, and in some cases lucrative, so it is surprising that no such tour has been developed in Kentucky. One reason may be that the eastern Kentucky coal fields lie off the beaten track. The western fields, crossed by roads heavily used by tourists, are better known for strip mining than deep mining. Most of the successful coal mine tours in other states are located in populous areas and lie on or very close to major interstate highways.

To be a feasible venture, a coal mine tour must attract large numbers of visitors, primarily from outside the host community. In general, visitors will go somewhat further out of their way to see a coal mine than to visit a museum structure. However, they are unlikely to travel several hours to see a mine, unless the trip can be combined with a visit to other interesting sites. Several of the state parks in eastern Kentucky attract large numbers of visitors each year, and it is tempting to suggest developing a mine tour in or near one of these parks. This is not the only nor necessarily the best possibility, however. Visitors to state parks appear to be drawn primarily by the presence of scenic natural areas for outdoor recreation. A coal tour has a touch of amusement park, and may not appeal to a majority of park visitors.

A chronic problem faced by many communities in the eastern coalfields is the lack of overnight accommodations for visitors. Although a mine tour by itself is unlikely to draw visitors from really long distances, a tour can enhance other attractions in the area and contribute substantially to growth in tourism. If this is expected, arrangements must be made to provide rooms, campsites, and restaurants to accommodate the visitors.

Coal mine tours have been proposed in several parts of the state: Flatwoods in Pike County, and Black Mountain in Harlan County are examples discussed in Chapter 3.

Restored Company Town

The coal camp or company town, with its rows of company-owned houses, the company-owned school, clinic and commissary, has become part of the legend of the early days of coal. The restoration of an abandoned town as a tourist attraction, or use of buildings in still active towns for this purpose, could also be regarded as a coal museum. Only one such restoration was found in a coal region, the village of Eckley near Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Although not related to coal, boom towns from gold or silver mining areas have been restored in some of the western states, and are comparable in some ways to coal towns. A reconstructed boom town built as a part of a museum in Montana is included as an example of this type of development.

Restoration of a coal town is the most expensive idea discussed in this chapter, since at a minimum it would require refurbishing and operating several buildings. The cost escalates with the scope of the project, and one can easily imagine a Kentucky Coal Park as extensive as the $27 million Horse Park near Lexington, with a restored town, mine tour, tipple tour, train rides, lodge, shops, campsites, and craft

Company Town in the 1930's, Holden, West Virginia

town, quite unlike most coal towns, was landscaped and sewered, and boasted attractive government buildings, as well as a swimming pool and tennis courts for employees and their families. Wheelwright and Inland Steel's mine were well-known examples of the best in working conditions and corporate planning.

Wheelwright was sold in 1965 to Island Creek Coal, and a year later to a holding company, Mountain Investment, Incorporated. Many of the residents left and facilities have fallen into disrepair.

At one time local officials and staff at the Big Sandy Area Development District proposed to create a tourist-recreational facility at Wheelwright. In 1973 the Legislative Recreational Facilities Review Commission mentioned local interest in developing a mine tour and related tourist facilities to exploit Wheelwright's unique character.

Current plans for the development of Wheelwright, however, do not include tourism. The town was incorporated in 1970. Some of the facilities have been purchased from Mountain Investment, Incorporated, and about 60% of the homes are now privately owned. Current plans envision Wheelwright as a dormitory town for commuters employed in surrounding mines.

founder of the American Folk Song Festival (1930-72). Her house will serve primarily as a museum containing primitive mountain musical instruments and other artifacts of the Appalachian culture which she acquired during her years in the mountains. A replica of Jesse Stuart's Cave Run Schoolhouse will also be built during Phase One of the park. The target date for the completion of Phase One is January 1979.

Phase Two of the project, which is in the preliminary planning stages, would include an amphitheater and support facilities. Although no shows have been scripted at this time, an ongoing outdoor drama is proposed that will probably focus on the American Folk Song Festival, Jean Thomas's life, Jesse Stuart, and a partial revival of the folk song festival itself. Plans call for twelve hundred fixed seats, with additional ground seating for two thousand. Construction on the amphitheater may begin within two years.

No target date has been set for Phase Three of the park, which is a convention and exhibition center. This center will be built to meet the convention needs of the northeastern Kentucky region and to serve up to six or seven hundred people at one time.

The 131-acre site for the park was donated by the Boyd County Fiscal Court. The Convention Center Board of Kentucky provided a grant of $1,259,000. The money provided by the state was matched by the value of the land that the fiscal court donated. Business and industrial support in the Ashland area enabled the Greater Ashland Foundation to purchase the Jean Thomas house, its contents, and her copyrights and book publication privileges. An additional two hundred acres of adjacent land may be available from the federal government in the future. Eventually a picnic area and campgrounds will be included in the park. The nearest camping facilities now are those located thirty-eight miles from the park at Greenbo Lake State Resort Park. There are some lodging facilities in the Ashland area at this time but none are being formally planned for the convention center. The Appalachian Cultural Park is a few minutes from Interstate 64, which provides access from West Virginia and much of Kentucky, as well as other states. The park is an official project of the FIVCO Area Development District.

Wheelwright—Floyd County

Wheelwright, a small town in southern Floyd County, may be the most unusual of Kentucky's mining communities. It was a company town, first owned by Elkhorn Coal, then made into a showcase of progressive town-planning under Inland Steel. Although never large, the

demonstrations. A major development of this sort could potentially combine, on one site, enough interesting things to do and see to draw visitors in large numbers out of their way to see it.

In theory it would be possible to build a tourist mining town anywhere in the state. Locations for an authentic company town, however, are limited to the sites of actual towns which now either are abandoned or have stagnated, thereby retaining something of the character of a past era. Wheelwright, Lynch and Blue Heron are examples of such towns which have been recommended as Kentucky tourist attractions.

Eckley Village, Pennsylvania

Eckley, Pennsylvania currently is being restored as a living museum depicting life in a coal town around the turn of the century. The town is about forty miles south of Scranton near Interstate 81. It had stagnated when the mines closed; but after Paramount Pictures used Eckley to film "The Molly McGuires" in 1968, a citizens group purchased the whole town from its owner and gave title to the state, with the understanding that it would be developed as a museum. Renovation and operation of Eckley Village is now the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Museum Complex.

Eckley Village consists of fifty-one houses, a church, numerous outbuildings, and several sets built by Paramount Pictures. The elderly residents of Eckley have been allowed to stay in their homes, with cosmetic changes to the building exteriors. TV antennas have been replaced by cable TV, cars must be parked in sheds, and utility lines have been put underground. Several buildings are being restored and furnished for display: a doctor's office, the owner's house, a foreman's house, and several miners' duplexes. The miners' homes are being restored to represent homes of several of the ethnic groups which were important in the mining region; one half of a duplex might represent a Hungarian home of the 1870's, the other side the same group in the 1920's. The church has been rebuilt and furnished.

In addition to the restoration, a 10,000 square-foot visitors center has been constructed for the village. This will contain exhibits focusing on the life of miners around the turn of the century. Visitors will be able to walk around the village and go into those buildings which are open for display. Lectures and slide shows will be given in the auditorium of the visitors center. Once it is open, the village probably will host special events such as ethnic festivals.

In 1972, it was estimated that reconstruction at Eckley would cost almost $4 million, excluding construction of the visitors center, and design and administrative costs. This included putting all utility wires underground, upgrading the inhabited residences and restoring the exteriors, providing sewers, sewage treatment, street lighting, walkways and streets, filling old strip mine pits and generally cleaning up the area. As of this writing, actual construction costs to date were not available.

The World Musem of Mining

The World Museum of Mining, located in Butte, Montana, was chartered in 1964 as a non-profit educational corporation. Although it is near the site of an 1864 gold strike, this is primarily a copper mining region, and the museum features copper mining. The site was donated by the Anaconda Company.

The museum has many outdoor exhibits, including a tall mining shaft, a sixty-five-ton experimental electric ore truck, a mill, an armored pay car, and a stagecoach. A large working mining pit can be seen from the observation deck of the museum. Part of the museum is a restored town called Hell Roarin' Gulch, which includes a general store, saloon, drug store, soda fountain, and many other exhibits and stores. According to the President, David Johns, the idea of a restored town came about because "We had warehouses full of items donated to the museum and no place to exhibit them . . . we decided to construct showcases, and to construct them in the forms of various buildings found in an old mining camp at the turn of the century."[4]

The museum has two paid employees, a security officer, and a full-time manager. Financing is through donations, income from rides, sales of memberships, and profits from a small gift shop. The museum draws over 100,000 visitors a year.

The Flatwoods area lies 1½ miles off of U.S. 23 near Virgie, Kentucky, in southern Pike County. The land is owned by Bethlehem Steel, which operates the Beth Elkhorn Mines; other parcels of land in the area are owned by the Big Sandy Land Company. Bethlehem Steel was approached two years ago about donating land and is willing to donate 211 acres in the Flatwoods area for use as a coal mining museum or exhibition mine. Some of the ideas suggested for the site include an exhibition mine, a museum built out of coal to house exhibits showing mining techniques, and a recreational area.

Even though no plans have been put on paper for the Flatwoods site, it is considered by local officials to be the more promising of the two suggested for the county. Those officials also believe that Pike County is and will become even more attractive to visitors. The city of Pikeville, with its cut-through and diversion of the Big Sandy River, recently gained valuable land for development. Part of this development, the Pikeville River Mall, should attract more lodging facilities to the area. A coal gasification plant is being constructed on U.S. 23 about ten miles south of Pikeville, and will be open for tours when completed. The Flatwoods site lies eight to ten miles farther south on US 23, which is, incidentally, soon to be a four-lane highway. Fishtrap Lake and Breaks Interstate Park are both in Pike County. Directly west of the county are the Mountain Parkway corridor and Jenny Wiley State Resort Park.

The Appalachian Cultural Park

The Greater Ashland Area Cultural and Economic Development Foundation, Incorporated, is overseeing the creation of the Appalachian Cultural Park in Boyd County, near Ashland, Kentucky. The Foundation's park commission would eventually like to have a number of industrial exhibits or museums on the park site, once other phases are completed. No proposals or plans for these exhibits are ready at this time. Some commission members have suggested that exhibits focusing on steel, oil, and coal could be created at the park and sponsored in part by Armco Steel, Ashland Oil, Ashland Coal, and the National Mine Service, all of which have northeastern Kentucky facilities or headquarters. The coal exhibit or museum, according to some commission members, would probably have a theme highlighting the technology of coal mining and the many uses of coal.

Phase One of the park is already under construction and will include relocating Jean Thomas's "Wee House in the Woods." Jean Thomas is perhaps best known as the "traipsin' woman" and the

estimates that only 1/5 of this will be needed for concession and maintenance facilities, so only limited rehabilitation work will be needed on these buildings. The mine is sealed and will need extensive repair if a train tour of any length is to be developed.

Actual repair to the mine or the installation of a new ventilation system would not occur in the first phase of development. The one thousand foot tunnel tour, conducted by retired miners, would be restricted to the entrance and exit area of the mine. The annual operating costs of Phase I are estimated at $50,000.

The second phase of the proposed development would cost $670,000 (1976-77 estimates); this would include extensive improvements to the buildings and grounds, the opening of some of the mining area, and extension of the tour. The feasibility study suggests an operating season from April through October, and an admission price comparable to that charged at nearby exhibition mines. According to the study, if operating and development costs are correct, the facility would begin to make a profit with 17,543 visitors each year.

This project is endorsed by the Cumberland Valley Area Development District and has received more local support than any other proposed site in Kentucky. House Resolution 88 (see Chapter 1, above) represents additional endorsement. The description of this project is more detailed here because the basic concept of the attraction is well-developed. The main drawback of this site is the distance from major cities and interstate highways. Despite this, the proposed exhibition mine and museum at Black Mountain deserve careful attention as a potential educational and recreational attraction which could become a major economic catalyst for the area.

Pike County

Pike County produces more deep mine coal than any other county in Kentucky. Its Chamber of Commerce and fiscal court have been interested in the possibility of building either a museum or exhibition mine in the county for a number of years. Two possible sites are being considered at this time: the Emma Bartley property and the Flatwoods area.

Mrs. E. Bartley, a Pike County native, has promised to donate thirty-two acres of land to the county for a coal museum or other recreational facility. The type of facility placed on the property is subject to her approval. An additional forty-eight acres adjacent to the site might be available.

CHAPTER III

PROPOSED COAL ATTRACTIONS IN KENTUCKY

The idea of building a coal museum is popular in Kentucky's mining regions. At one time or another many communities have considered proposals for a museum, a mine tour, or some similar attraction. Most of these projects have not progressed beyond early planning stages. However, two small exhibits were opened in recent months, and encouraging feasibility studies have been completed for others. These projects demonstrate considerable interest in building a coal museum, at least a local one. It might be possible for the state to assist in one or more of these local projects as an alternative to developing a state facility.

Nine existing or proposed Kentucky coal attractions are discussed on the following pages. These include the operating historymobile and the exhibit at Breaks Interstate park, and two major projects which have been studied in depth. The other projects are in early planning stages, and are thought to be representative of the many incipient local initiatives for developing coal-related attractions.

Breaks Interstate Park Coal Exhibit

Breaks Interstate Park is located on the Kentucky-Virginia border in extreme eastern Pike County. In June of 1977 the park opened a new visitors center, which highlights in exhibit form the history and natural attractions of the area in and around Breaks Interstate Park. The coal exhibit is entitled "Black Diamond—A Treasure Trove of Energy." It consists of pieces of coal of various sizes, a number of graphic illustrations, and short narrative descriptions of different types of coal, how coal is formed, how coal is currently used, and future uses of coal. Other themes include reclamation and mine safety.

A number of Pike County coal operators recently donated $6,000 to improve and expand the coal exhibit at Breaks Interstate Park. Some of this money, in the future, may be used to purchase historical artifacts relating to coal mining. The superintendent of the park and his staff are currently seeking to purchase such artifacts from private collectors.

As of this writing no figures were available on the attendance at the visitors center, which opened in June 1977. The entire park's operating season is from April 1 to the end of October. From Memorial Day through Labor Day a fee of fifty cents per car is charged. There is no special admission price for the visitors center.

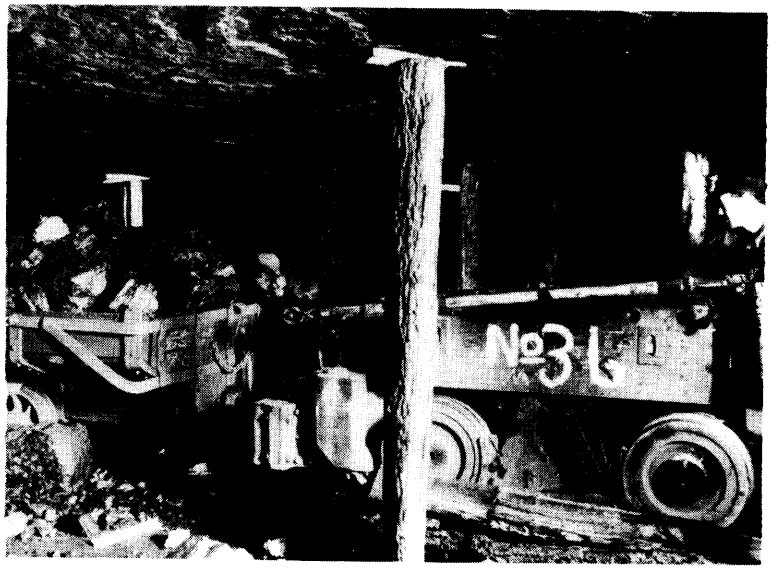
The cost of the visitors center and adjoining amphitheatre was estimated at $245,000. This cost does not include the exhibits.

The other facilities at Breaks Interstate Park include camping area, lodge, horseback riding, gift shops, boating, nature centers, and, of course, the natural attraction, the Breaks of the Russell Fork River. The park is located near U. S. Highway 460 and U. S. Highway 23, approximately thirty-three miles southeast of Pikeville, Kentucky.

The Kentucky Historymobile Coal Exhibit

The Kentucky Historical Society currently operates two mobile museums. The newest museum, "Kentucky Coal: The Emergence of an Industry," became operational in early 1978. This mobile coal exhibit is used primarily at schools, county fairs, and various other locations with heavy pedestrian traffic. The exhibit is also available to groups indicating special interest in the subject. It requires a driver who can take the museum to a location and then set it up by plugging it into a high-powered electric line.

The historymobile divides the story of Kentucky Coal into three distinct eras. "The Pick and Shovel" section focuses on the years 1830 to 1870. Tools and methods of early mining and aspects of traditional culture of the coal fields are featured, using historical photographs and some artifacts. Some of the artifacts were obtained from a collection in the Harlan County Library which is known as Judge Hill's collection. These artifacts are on loan to the historymobile and the Kentucky Historical Society. The next era is "The Coming of the Machine," the period from 1880 to 1930. Photographs show how mechanization was introduced into the coal mines, the beginning of formal safety measures, scenes of the early union movement, and company towns and their activities. An undercutting machine is mounted on the floor and other artifacts are mounted on the wall. The final era of the exhibit is "The Machine Age," the years 1940 through 1970. Different types of safety equipment are exhibited, as well as a three-dimension model of surface and underground mining. The entire attraction is housed inside the historymobile trailer, which greatly restricts the amount of exhibit space available.



Historical View of Underground Mining

Mine Number 32 is located near a number of other local attractions. The Lonesome Pine Ski area opened several years ago, but two mild winters forced it to close. The Chamber of Commerce anticipates that this attraction will open again if the exhibition mine is also opened. The operating seasons would be complementary, and the operations could use some of the same facilities. A few miles from Mine Number 32 is Kingdom Come State Park, which offers hiking, fishing, picnicking, and playground facilities. The park does not offer overnight accommodations. But the "bench" area of Mine Number 32, the long platform carved out of the mountain for the road, buildings, and other facilities, is large enough to accommodate a campground.

The development of Mine 32 would have two phases. Phase One would consist of general repairs to the buildings and grounds and the development of a one thousand foot tunnel tour, using electric cars. The estimated development cost for this phase is $100,000.

The Chamber of Commerce hopes to acquire some surface mining equipment, to illustrate that type of mining, using an exposed seam of coal located along the access road. This road, linking the mine and Kentucky Highway 160, will require repair. Existing buildings on the site provide 22,000 square feet of space. The feasibility study

various themes, including labor, mine safety, mine operations, and the uses of coal. The Tri-City Chamber of Commerce has not decided upon a particular theme for the exhibition mine or museum, but is interested in including a memorial commemorating miners who were killed or injured on the job. The proposed museum and exhibition mine would have a train tour of the coal mine and utilize existing buildings to house collections of artifacts acquired from coal companies, from individuals, and from Judge Hill's collection in the Harlan County Library.

A feasibility study of this project was conducted in 1975-76 by Luckett and Farley, Inc., of Louisville, Kentucky. According to the contract with the Tri-City Chamber of Commerce and the Appalachian Regional Commission, the study was "to confirm a site for the coal mining museum in Harlan County, to determine the economic feasibility of the project, and to describe the amount of development within these limits."[7] The criteria of profitability, attractiveness and safety were used to evaluate site.

The study concluded that the facility had "an immediate potential of 25,000 visitors with a future potential of perhaps 100,000 visitors,"[8] and therefore would be economically feasible. The one basis offered for these figures is the statement that "at least 33 percent [of the visitors at the Pine Mountain Visitors Center who specifically asked to tour a coal mine] would certainly have driven the sixty miles from Pineville to the Mine 32 site."[9]

The study's authors do acknowledge that the vast majority of visitors to Mine 32 must be those whose destination is the mine. The attraction must therefore be of sufficient interest to draw people eighty miles from a major corridor, and must attract enough individuals to make the operation profitable.

Aside from the mine itself, the attractiveness of the area is a positive factor in drawing visitors to Mine 32. The mine is located on Black Mountain near the highest point in Kentucky, in an area not visibly disturbed by strip mining. The town of Lynch, a former company town, has such unique architecture that the Kentucky Heritage Commission is currently looking at the possibility of placing certain buildings in the town on the historic register or of designating the entire town a historic district. Southeast Community College in Cumberland recently received a grant from the Center for Southern Folklore to study the history of Lynch. The potential thus exists to tie in a tour of the Lynch area with the exhibition coal mine.

Kentucky Historymobile

In addition to the mine models, the museum's main attraction is a thirteen-minute slide show. The general theme is the social change that was brought to traditional culture by the emergence of the coal industry. The show traces the industry through various periods and its narration includes interviews with people connected with the coal industry.

One interesting feature of the historymobile is the use of a video porta-pack unit to record local history related to mining while the historymobile is on location. Society historians are available to help local groups decide on a topic, research it, and then present it on video tape.

The funds for purchasing, developing and operating the historymobile came from a federal grant to the Kentucky Historical Society. The $17,000 grant, matched by state funds, made possible the purchase of the trailer and the remodeling of its interior. The operation of the historymobile during the first four months of 1978 was about $9,000 in personnel costs and $8,000 for gas, repairs, and replacement parts. In April of 1978 a total of 2,251 visitors went through the historymobile exhibit.

According to Tom Gatewood, the curator of the historymobile, "Unlike the pioneer exhibit [the other historymobile operated by the

Historical Society], the coal exhibit does not seem to have the degree of state-wide appeal. It has an intense appeal to coal-producing regions of the state, and to persons and groups directly connected to the industry."

Blue Heron Mine, Proposed Company Town—McCreary County

The United States Army Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with the National Park Service, is currently implementing plans for the creation of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. The site is located in Kentucky and Tennessee. Kentucky's portion is in McCreary County, west of Interstate 75, along the Tennessee border. The Big South Fork Project is of the magnitude of the Land Between the Lakes area in western Kentucky. $100,000,000 has already been put into the federal budget for the project.

The Blue Heron mine site is within the Big South Fork area in McCreary County, Kentucky. It has been proposed that Blue Heron be restored as a typical coal company town, to be one of the attractions of the new recreational area. Only part of the community would be restored, because much of it lies on a floodplain. The Corps of Engineers is responsible for the construction of the entire Big South Fork Project; the National Park Service will be the operating agency.

Four alternatives for the Blue Heron site were proposed in a 1975 general design memorandum prepared for the Corps of Engineers by Land Development Analysts, Incorporated.[5] Alternative One is no action. Alternative Two would simply amount to rendering the mine site safe for public use, and would not involve taking steps to preserve the area. Alternative Three would be initiating stabilization practices to prevent further deterioration of the mine site, in addition to taking safety measures. Alternative Four would restore the community, to make it a unique educational and recreational facility. This alternative would involve the reconstruction of the community and a coal tipple, construction of a coal museum, a tram ride, nature walks, camping facilities, a concession area and a gift shop. The 1975 estimate for Alternative Four was $480,000, not including the cost of the land of the community itself. Maintenance costs were estimated at $14,000 and staffing up to $42,000 annually. An estimated admission fee of $1 for each adult and fifty cents per child would bring in $83,000 in 1980, according to the study by the Land Development Analysts.[6] The annual operating cost was estimated at $56,000, and net annual revenues could run up to $43,000.

Recently the National Park Service and the Corps of Engineers agreed that if the attractiveness of the proposed lodge near the Blue Heron mine site depends upon the mine to draw extra visitors, thereby making the lodge operation profitable, Alternative Four would probably be initiated. The study concluded that the lodge did not show a dependency on the restoration of the Blue Heron site for it to be profitable.

In October of 1979 a master plan for the area will be completed. If the present sentiment in the Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service prevails, Alternative Three will be chosen. This would make the site safe for public visitation and insure that further deterioration of the community would not take place. According to the general design memorandum, the National Park Service has not shown strong support for a major restoration project at the Blue Heron site. Lack of support for a very large project results from the fact that the National Park Service does not wish to assume the responsibility of a project that will require a large operating budget.

Some support still exists in both agencies, however, for the complete restoration of the Blue Heron site. Money is already budgeted for that restoration. Blue Heron could represent an excellent opportunity for Kentucky to participate in a worthy tribute to coal mining. Kentucky's involvement in the development of this facility could take the form of lobbying and political pressure directed toward the Blue Heron site.

Black Mountain Proposed Exhibition Mine—Harlan County

The Tri-City Chamber of Commerce, representing the cities of Cumberland, Benham, and Lynch in Harlan County, has done more work for a proposed coal musem and exhibition mine than any other group in Kentucky. This group hopes to create a coal attraction which will serve as a catalyst for further tourist and recreation development. The proposed site, in eastern Harlan County near he Kentucky/Virginia border, is eighty miles from Interstate 75, via U.S. 119.

The United States Steel Corporation, which operates a number of mines in the tri-city area, has offered to lease, at nominal cost, Mine Number 32 on Black Mountain. The mine was operated from 1950 through 1968. Two conditions are placed on the lease by U.S. Steel: that the organization leasing the area must be non-profit, and that the theme of any exhibits in the muesum should not be an indictment of the coal industry. Nevertheless, U.S. Steel is open to showcasing